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ABSTRACT

This historical case study explores the 34-year history of interdisciplinary curriculum development in one public school district. Interviews with nine veteran teachers and three administrators suggest that the role of curriculum specialists and the drive for accountability and consistency are the key influences on the curriculum development process. The data related to the changing role of the district's curriculum specialists supports Schwab's (1973; 1983) vision for curriculum professors and curriculum leaders. Teachers and administrators appreciate curriculum leaders who are collaborative, innovative, and able to apply local and international ideas to curriculum development. Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning's (2001) interpretive lenses suggest that cultural, political, and post-modern perspectives illuminate this curriculum history. The school district has developed a culture of collaboration, struggles with the way state standards are presented, and suffers from the common post-modern concern with lack of time. An appendix presents a veteran curriculum developers' interview protocol. (Contains 24 references.) (Author/SM)

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From "Creative Juice" to "Pioneer on an Iceberg:" Teachers' and administrators' perspectives on their 34-year old interdisciplinary curriculum

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Abstract

This historical case study explores the 34-year history of interdisciplinary curriculum development in one public school district. Interviews with nine veteran teachers and three administrators suggest that the role of curriculum specialists and the drive for accountability and consistency are the key influences on the curriculum development process. The data related to the changing role of the district's curriculum specialists supports Schwab's (1973; 1983) vision for curriculum professors and curriculum leaders. Teachers and administrators appreciate curriculum leaders who are collaborative, innovative, and able to apply local and international ideas to curriculum development. Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning's (2001) interpretative lenses suggest that cultural, political, and post-modern perspectives illuminate this curriculum history. The school district has developed a culture of collaboration, struggles with the way state standards are presented, and suffers from the common post-modern concern with lack of time.

The work of teachers as curriculum makers has been championed by scholars concerned with local contexts of teaching (Clandinin & Connelly,1992; Ben-Peretz, 1990). This paper examines how teachers and administrators make meaning of their work as interdisciplinary curriculum developers in one public school district. Responding to an invitation from Goodson (1994) to study "existing and continuing practice and structures" and how practical circumstances "are not just 'placed' but systematically constructed," data collection focused on talking with teachers and curriculum supervisors about the their current and past work and how it is influenced by social and political variables (pp. 37-38).

Although there is ample research evidence that teachers frequently promote stability rather than change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), Reid (1975) has argued that teachers' beliefs and expectations are a crucial variable in how curriculum is implemented or changed. Klein's (1989) call to action links teacher's curricular work to professional identity:

> Te achers are, indeed, primary participants in curriculum development, whether they have the needed skills and resources or not. To become the professional educators they are expected to be, your teachers must have the abilities needed to engage in curriculum development as skilled and continuous participants. (p. 44)

This study explores what skills and resources teachers bring to bear on their work with social studies curriculum. It documents some of the teachers' beliefs and articulates the specific challenges they face in promoting their visions of social studies curriculum development. The theories of Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning (2001) as well as Schwab's (1973; 1983) insights will be applied to the stories of one district's journey to create interdisciplinary curriculum over four decades.

The Context of the School District and Curriculum

Unlike most elementary schools in the United States which rely on textbooks for their social studies curriculum and/or where social studies may be ignored (Thornton,1992), the district being studied has used interdisciplinary units to teach social studies, language arts, and (to some extent) science for 34 years. These units are based on what district administrators identify as constructivist and process-oriented philosophies of education. Published documentation (1990) of the elementary social studies program structure states that:

> Elementary students should make connections between what they already know and what they are learning through a curriculum that is integrated, not fragmented...the curricula of social studies and language arts are natural companions in a holistic approach to learning. *The Elementary Social Studies Program Structure*, therefore, was created as a framework to guide the development of and to provide support for core units of study that facilitate the teaching of language arts skills through the content and processes of the social studies.

These units are structured around a "time, space, and culture" model (Downey, 1986) as the three themes in social studies. Writing teams representing elementary teachers from each of the schools in the district are currently led by a language arts/social studies consultant (curriculum supervisor) to create or revise units. More instructional time is given to these interdisciplinary units than any other content area at the elementary level.

The curriculum work that teachers reflected on in this study has a unique history. What began in 1968 as outlines that offered ideas to teams of teachers for creative teaching of language arts and social studies, eventually led to the district eliminating basal readers and social studies textbooks in favor of unit boxes that included trade books, videos, audiotapes, teacher-created materials, and other resources. Originally,

individual teachers, pairs, or small teams of teachers met after school and in the summer to develop original interdisciplinary curriculum. Eventually, writing teams representing elementary teachers from different schools in the district were formalized and led by a language arts/social studies curriculum supervisor to create and revise units.

The particular district where the research took place is in a PDS collaborative between a Research One University and a public school district in the northeastern United States. The PDS is located in a district encompassing 150 square miles. Although largely an agricultural community, there are some urban and suburban characteristics of the district. Three of the four elementary schools within the PDS are classified by the state as suburban. The fourth elementary school would be considered rural by most visitors. The university collaborating with the PDS is located within the district's borders and provides the major source of employment in the region. The university brings most of the racial and cultural diversity to the school district as it attracts a sizable international student population. Parents are highly involved in this district, and in the year this study began, the district won a "What Parents Want Award" from a national organization. Over 7,000 students attend the district and approximately 80% pursue post-secondary training.

Within the PDS, cross-role planning teams were developed in which a university faculty member joined with a handful of district teachers and at least one administrator to develop pre-service and in-service teacher education courses within various content areas (Snow & Silva, 2001). At the Holmes Partnership in 2000, the PDS was recognized for its attention to inquiry and in 2002, the Association of Teacher Educators named the PDS a Distinguished Program in Teacher Education. School-university relationships build on

a history in the district of administrators supporting teachers working in teams. Due to the surrounding community's values, particularly the inclusion of a Research One university, the school district may have a distinct bent toward curriculum development.

The Research Questions

The primary research question driving this study was:

- How do participants in an inquiry-oriented professional development school view their relationship to the elementary social studies curriculum?

As I completed my first interviews with teachers, it became clear to me that teachers' beliefs and relationships to the social studies curriculum might be closely related to the philosophy that drove the units they taught. The social studies units in this district were unusual in that they were teacher-created and integrated social studies and language arts. In order to understand how the district came to develop these units, I wanted to interview veterans who had a hand in the early design of the unique integrated social studies curriculum. As I began to talk with teachers who had worked in the district for multiple decades, what emerged was a story of how teachers' work with social studies curriculum had changed over the years. So, although I began with one research question, this paper explores the historical question which emerged as an early interest of those whom I interviewed:

- How has the nature of developing social studies curriculum changed in this district since the inception of its original integrated social studies/language arts units?

This second question, which guides the research reported in this paper focuses less on the PDS and more on the history of curriculum development in the district.

Methods

This descriptive case study explored how teachers and administrators who are viewed as curriculum leaders understand their relationship to the interdisciplinary curriculum. This study asked how the nature of interdisciplinary curriculum work has changed over the course of thirty-four years in this district. The unit of analysis was one particular district. Nine teachers who were identified as social studies curriculum leaders participated in conversations about their curriculum work that were taped and transcribed. Three administrators in the same district who are committed to curriculum work were also interviewed. All participants in the study possess over a decade of experience in the school district and four were original creators of the first units in 1968. Although the focus of the study was teachers' relationships to curriculum development, I also reviewed four units that were developed in the early 1970s and two units that were developed in the late 1990s, in order to include historical document analysis for this study. I also observed elementary social studies instruction throughout the school year of 2001-2002 in the district being studied and acted as a social studies resource person to the Professional Development School in the district. By combining a phenomenological approach with some ethnography and a historical case study (Merriam, 1998), I sought to most fully appreciate how various members of this district understand curriculum.

Data for this study were collected over a one-year period. Table 1.1 summarizes the data collection schedule.

Table 1. 1 Data Collection Summary

	Cross-role planning team	PDS in-service teachers	Retired teachers & administrators	In-service administrators
Interviews	11/01-3/02	12/01-3/02	1/02-5/02	3/02-4/02
District Curriculum Documentation	6/01-4/02			
Field Notes	5/01-5/02			
Teachers' "informal" curriculum project documentation	6/01-4/02			
Researcher's Journal	5/01-5/02			

Sampling

The main source of data consisted of in-depth interviews with twelve different members of the school district that was part of the PDS being studied. Figure 1.1 provides a sociogram showing the relationships among the participants in this study. The arrows indicating "friendship" denote that two pairs of teachers in this study worked closely together at the same grade level and chose to reveal to each other their participation in the study. Their camaraderie may have contributed to consistency between their stories. Each teacher or administrator was chosen to participate in the study because of his or her unique relationship to the social studies curriculum in the district.

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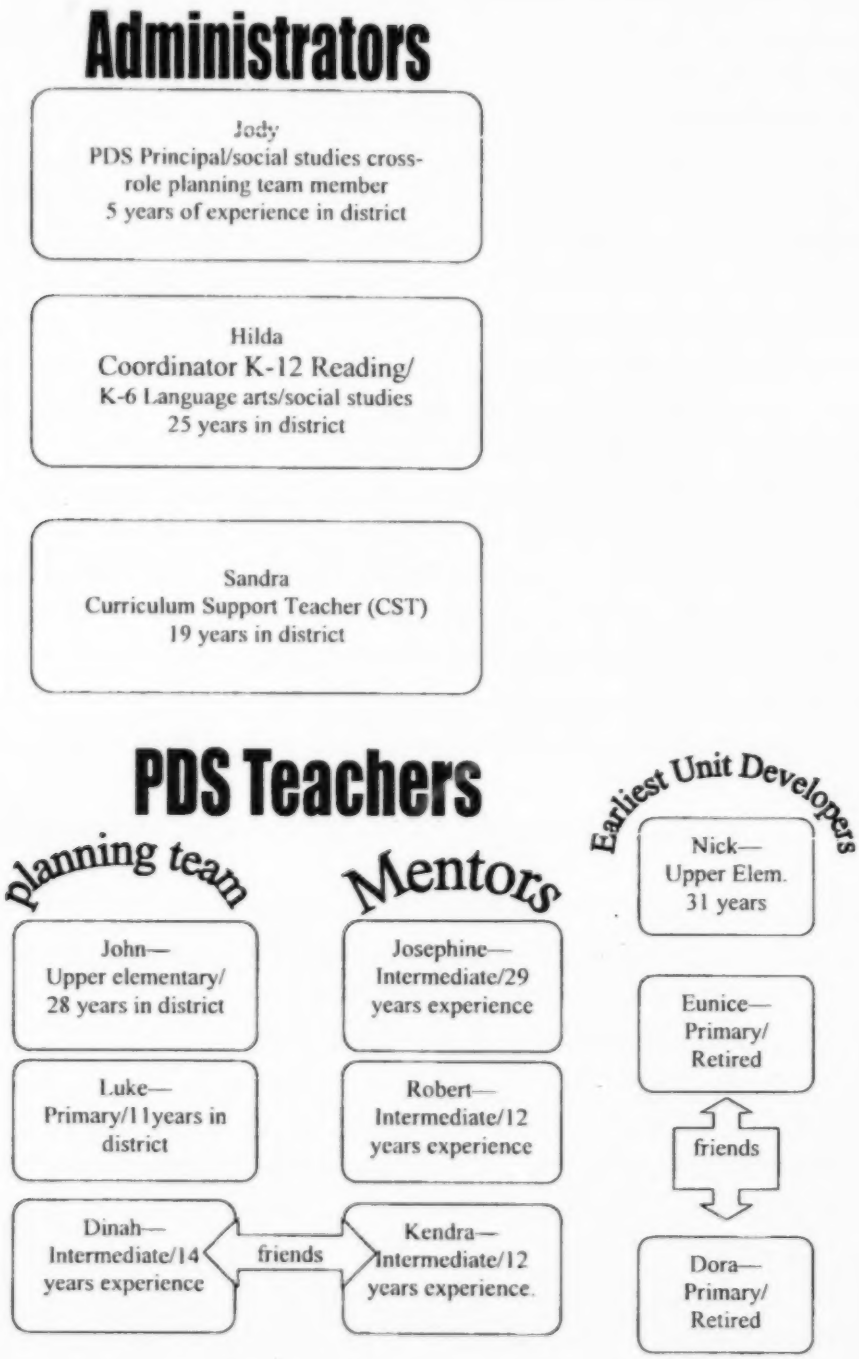
Figure 1.1 Interview Participants



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Not counting myself, the cross-role planning team consists of a universe of five (possibly six, if a curriculum support teacher who was involved occasionally is included). The universe of PDS teachers in this collaboration embraces approximately 89 full-time classroom teachers (this includes the four teachers on the social studies cross-role planning team). The administration team, which would be most relevant to this PDS, entails nine people. The number of teachers who are alive who worked on the first units in the late 1960s and early 1970s probably consists of approximately 20 individuals.

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Supplemental notes and impressions about the interviews were recorded in my researcher's journal after the interviews. The interviews were semistructured (Merriam, 1998), in that I used a list of pre-determined exploratory questions, but also followed up on the information that emerged throughout the interviews. Participants in the study had the opportunity to review the transcripts to offer any additional information or clarify their remarks.

Interview protocols [see Appendix A] were used to guide the discussion. Our formal discussions lasted between 40 and 120 minutes. Repeated review of interview transcripts and my notes from the interviews allowed me to explicate essential themes in the data.

To begin participant selection, I asked one retired teacher to suggest teachers who were instrumental in the cultivation of the unique social studies program offered in this district. She suggested several names, and I used a "snowball" effect to identify three teachers who were intimately involved in the conception of the units. After I talked with these three teachers on the telephone, all three agreed to meet with me for in-depth taped interviews.

In selecting current teachers and administrators, I also used reputational sampling (Merriam, 1998). I began by interviewing each member of the PDS social studies cross-role planning team. This team of four teachers and one principal has worked with the university social studies instructor to develop and teach the social studies methods course for the interns and summer social studies workshops for teachers. As volunteers who agreed to work on the social studies planning team, they were a ready source of data regarding social studies curriculum development. Two principals offered ranked lists of teachers from each PDS school who would be articulate, experienced in social studies curriculum work, and involved in the PDS. One of the PDS directors (a university faculty member) reviewed these lists and he offered his suggestions regarding whom should be interviewed. Finally, I asked a former teacher at the district who had gone on to a career in higher education and had done considerable research in this PDS to offer any insights into my selection of participants. She concurred with the list of participants I was beginning to settle on and offered three additional names of teachers I might interview.

After formally interviewing each of the teachers on the PDS social studies planning team, I selected the three who had the most experience with social studies curriculum work to complete follow up interviews. Three additional teachers who were in the PDS and identified as social studies curriculum workers by reputation were also invited to participate in the study. These teachers were selected to represent diversity in grade levels taught, gender, and building placement. Every teacher who was invited to participate in the study agreed to be interviewed.

I was serving as both a professional development associate (PDA, or what would be traditionally be called a supervisor) and the social studies methods course instructor in the PDS partnership being studied. My direct involvement in the research setting allowed me to better understand the context in which my participants were formally and informally learning about curriculum. During member checking, one participating teacher in this study volunteered his own belief that teachers had revealed more to me through my individual conversations with them than he had ever heard teachers say in a group setting (Researcher's journal, 5/29/02).

Curriculum Workers' Stories of the Birth of the Units

The First Interdisciplinary Units

I reviewed four units that were developed in 1971 and 1972 in order to examine historical documents for this study. All of the titles of the units I examined had a science focus: *Vivacious Monkeys & Prodigious Apes, Ring of Fire, The Rise of Technology*, and *Honeybees*. These units ranged in length from 29-72 pages. Two of the units will be described briefly to provide a flavor of this early curriculum. *Vivacious Monkeys & Prodigious Apes* was similar to a homemade vocabulary workbook. In fact, the introductory page explains, "This booklet is designed to help you enlarge your vocabulary…The pictures and the topical or thematic approach will help you learn more words rapidly." The purpose of the unit was clearly to teach vocabulary and reading skills, gaining knowledge of primates was secondary, and social studies content appeared to be absent. Drawings of primates accompany a paragraph with key vocabulary

highlighted. After each of the eleven pages with an illustration, there are ten questions that quiz the student's understanding of the accompanying vocabulary.

The unit *Honeybees* had more of an integrated social studies, language arts, and science approach (Loerch, 1971). Page one of this unit lists the following:

Concepts to be developed and extended:

- What each individual does affects the total group.
- Living things are interdependent with one another and their environment.
- The physical environment provides basic essentials for life for both man and animal.
- The living thing is a product of its heredity and environment.
- Organisms and environments are in constant change throughout the year.
- Living things interchange matter and energy with the environment and with other living things.
- Survival depends upon individual fulfillment of the social roles. (Loerch, 1971)

The unit is really only about 12 pages for each of four different levels of readers. There are about eleven language arts activities, four social studies activities, four science suggestions, three word study activities, and three independent reading prompts for each reading level. "Related activities" or culminating projects are suggested at the end of the unit for the entire class. The unit truly follows an outline form and offers creative teaching ideas for upper elementary students. Suggested social studies activities such as "prepare illustrated talks and reports on bees and bee hives" (p.6) or labeling world maps with "early locations of bees" (p. 11) would be examples of simplified social science. By and large, children are invited to recall facts about bees from their reading, although some critical thinking questions are included, such as, "When men have wars who benefits?" after children have discussed the robber bees that start wars (p.18). The unit author also suggests that the children compare the community of bees to the community of learners in their classroom during "center" time.

One teacher who was a participant in the birth of the units in 1969 described her excitement in the year she was planning to move to a new school where units were to be first implemented,

> I used to go over there after I was finished at [school] and meet with staff in the planning stages. And we started to outline what... themes would appeal to children and still cover the requirements we have to do for the state. So we batted that around for a long time. And then finally we got to choose the units that we would develop, and then we had guidelines for what we had to include in these units. . . the whole thing was meshing the language arts program with the social studies program. And even the science. We brought in all the aspects that we could think of and see how the kids could connect... So each of us then took one of...the unit(s) and started to develop it. And then we worked throughout the summer and we started that fall.
>
> So we had really a skeleton compared to what the units are like now. I mean this was starting from scratch. We had nothing to go on. We were really developing this thing ourselves. So it required a lot of research in that we went back because we had to find the books to fit in, even the read-aloud books. . . We were throwing the basals out because we wanted to see everything connected. And that was a big job; just finding the right materials to go with this theme. Then you had to bring in geography and all of those kinds of things. (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02)

Teachers in the study who were working with the units in the early 1970's agreed that the main reason the units were first developed was to provide better language arts instruction. Topics were chosen because they would "hook" students' interest (boys who were reluctant readers, in particular, were tempted by themes such as dinosaurs and underwater life), according to two of the participants (Dora & Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02). Nick explained that social studies was just the "vehicle" for the English program to be delivered (Interview, 3/27/02). While the units were initially the purveyance of individual teams of teachers in certain schools, over time they were shared across all the elementary schools in the district. Another veteran of the district explained the units' inception this way,

> For the past 30 years there have not been textbooks in the…school system. The unit changed though…and the way we present the units has changed. I remember starting out at [one of the district's elementary schools] as a new teacher and people would get together and say hmm, let's write a new unit. And it wasn't that we got extra money for writing that unit. You wrote that unit after school on your own time with another teacher. And the units were not as in-depth…What we were doing is saying hmm, if we study Germany we can do fairy tales and the Brother's Grimm and won't that be great? You were really building a unit around a language arts idea…And the social studies, again, is that poor sister.
>
> Since then we've gotten a little bit more sophisticated and we've taken a more district approach. . . I mean it used to be that [one school] studied the Netherlands. Nobody else studied the Netherlands. And [one school] studied Denmark and nobody else studied Denmark. And what happened was you had such a disconnect then when the kids got together in what was then the junior high school. So then people started saying well let's see if we can get district elementary units. And we've gone through several unit changes. Some of the early units were not even social studies. Let's study apples…(Josephine, Interview, 2/5/02)

An administrator who was identified as a key player in the development of the first units (he was the principal at the school where these units were first advanced) offered his own interpretation of the theoretical foundation for the units.

> Even in the '60s, we used to have discussions about what more could we put in the curriculum within the limited day? So we began to think of ways that we could basically work around the idea that children don't necessarily study separate subjects. That's a figment of adult imaginations. This is geography, this is history [that is an adult construct], [from the perspective of] the children, they have a life experience, they live it….and the more you can get [children] involved actively in simulating activities or what came to be known as hands-on instruction, in today's terms, one could say it's very much constructivist, in terms of the theory.
>
> Back at that time, we were just really [applying] some Piaget and Bruner and different people… in cognitive psychology and . . . If anything, we were coming out of the Dewey era of Progressive education at the time. The difference was that we felt that the reading, the writing could be very exciting and very dynamic—the literature especially—if it was done through a content base such as social studies. So a way to make the social studies come alive was to come up with a theme or a topic around which you organized the experience for a set period of time. And it could be six weeks, eight weeks, but it wasn't just a week at a time. So we began to identify topics that fit what we had to do in terms of the social studies. (Ted, Interview, 4/18/02)

Early Enthusiasm

Teachers and administrators shared emotional stories of the powerful work they felt they were doing when the integrated units were first created. Ted, a 34-year veteran administrator in this district recalled the way that teamwork was fostered.

> Looking back on this, I have a better perspective now than at the time. What we really did was fairly dramatic in 1968/69....We reorganized the school. And we didn't tinker with it...We addressed what we called the organization and the structure. The organization of the school is the *who* does what when and where. And the structure is *what* they do...In other words the curriculum...You used to hear the stories about...the hidden curriculum...We got rid of a lot of that [hidden curriculum] because [our curriculum here] is what it is...
>
> And I think this is most interesting, we took self-contained faculties and reorganized them into teaching teams, division staffs. So the idea... heretofore in the '60s, there was a model where it was a differentiated staff and you would have a master teacher or a team leader. Then you would have regular teachers and parents. Well the one person was the expert. And the rest just did their job. We devised a model that was the exact opposite of that. Ours was a shared leadership flat model where we said now there are six topics to be taught and if there's six or seven teachers, each one of you can sign up to be the chair for the unit. And we rotated the leadership. And in the process we built the staff's confidence and how you are a leader of your colleagues. So when it's your turn to be the chairperson there's a role you play. Others know their turn is coming up. So probably you're going to be a little more thoughtful and you learn, they learn from you, you learn from them. (Ted, Interview, 4/18/02)

This leadership seemed to invigorate teachers in the 1970s as they poured their time and energy into curriculum development. Retired teachers remembered staying up until 1 a.m. in the morning working on units and devoting their Sundays to unit planning. One teacher's commitment to her work went so far as to overtake her vacation plans. She recalled,

> I was going to Ireland in the summer, and I was working on the unit. And I was more concerned, not with my house or what was going on, but [with] what would happen if there were a fire or something or [if] I was lost or went down with the plane. What was going to happen with this unit? And I started to tell everybody, now if something happens to me, the unit you can find in . . . I mean that's just how you just were with these things... But as other schools started to come in and we realized that we had to revise...we sometimes would get a person from another school to help write the unit. (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02)

This same teacher who had worked on writing the first units and shown such commitment to the curriculum had shared her knowledge at conferences and district presentations. To a wider audience, her commitment seemed excessive. She explained how others reacted to her ideas,

> That was the biggest complaint when we presented this to other people. They wanted to do something different but they weren't willing really to put . . . so much time. And I said 'Yeah. It does take time. And if you're a professional you're willing to do this.' (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02)

Another retired teacher concurred that the time devoted to creating such units in the early 1970s was worth it.

> You weren't locked into a book that was giving you step-by-step everything to do…And it just made your creative juices drip. (Dora, Interview, 1/8/02)

Such creative curriculum development was time consuming and empowering for teachers who were involved in the early development of the units. But, not every school in the district had teachers who were excited to do this kind of work over the next three decades. The personal influence of curriculum supervisors and administrators (such as Ted, one of the participants in this study) originally pushed the units into more schools and classrooms across the district (Eunice and Dora, Interview, 1/8/02). As units were revised and eventually institutionalized in all schools, cross-district teams were formalized to write the units and do much of the work that was once left up to individual teacher teams.

A retired teacher, who had great admiration for a curriculum support teacher (CST) in the 1960s, compared the curriculum supervisor to "a little fly… a mosquito carrying a virus, so to speak" because of the way she spread her ideas about integrated curriculum throughout the district (Dora, Interview, 1/8/02). Another retired teacher who

actually began working on the integrated units at the request of a CST in the 1960s described the CST at that time.

> She can come on strong, boy. When she believed in something you know she really did…As I said, some people, it was hard for them, they wanted somebody really nice and well [that CST] came on like gangbusters. But she got the people. (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02)

Despite "coming on like gang busters," this curriculum support teacher was much loved and revered by many of her colleagues. She "charged up" the teachers she worked with (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02). The curriculum supervisor of the 1970s resembled Schwab's (1983) ideal curriculum chairman in that she literally sought curriculum problems "at home and abroad." In fact, that curriculum support teacher organized an exchange between primary teachers in England and the district where she worked. She brought English ideas about teaching language arts and community-building to her home district. The teacher who recognized the abrasiveness of this CST also commented,

> After [this CST] died, we all said, every time we would do something we'd say wouldn't [she] love this? When I saw [another retired teacher] this summer, I said I never realized I could miss somebody as much as I missed [this CST] because she had a big impact on us. She was not any shrinking violet. I mean she could come on strong. And some people might have had a hard time dealing with that. But you knew if you …didn't like certain things, you could say to her, "I don't agree with you." At least I did. And she'd listen to you and then she'd explain her side, I explained my side and we'd come to some kind of a consensus on it. But it's certainly the most exciting thing I ever did as a teacher. And the first years were hard because… we were the only school involved in this. (Eunice, Interview, 1/8/02)

In talking to retired teachers, the name of this CST was often invoked as a respected colleague, because of her vision for curriculum, knowledge of research about children's learning, and practical knowledge about instruction. The CST had a seminal role in the development of the units in the 1960s and the power of the position is still recognized today.

Among teaching veterans and curriculum specialists in the district, there is almost a mythology around the birth of the first units. While teachers sometimes scoff at how scant the first units were in their documentation, there is tremendous respect for the vision of those educators who devoted their time and energy to creating a foundation for the units that are used today. The following comments illustrate how the current Social Studies/Language Arts Coordinator contextualizes the early curriculum work that her predecessor and others created. She characterizes the early units with language reminiscent of James Beane's (1997) curricular focus on child and society. Then she portrays the value of the units for today in the words of Wiggins & McTighe's (1998) "essential and enduring" understanding.

> A lot of this program actually was influenced by [the reading consultant of the 1960s and 1970s], her experiences in observing in British schools where the children did lots and lots of hands-on activities and basically thematic units that were decided upon by the children and the teacher and then just kind of evolved as they went along. Interesting enough, now the British have a national curriculum... But that's really where a lot of these ideas were conceived. I remember [the former language arts coordinator and curriculum support teacher] talking about how they met every day after school and brainstormed what they would do the next day. And [the former language arts coordinator] was always on [teachers who created the first units] to capture it on paper. We have some of those original units. And they're so different from what our units look like today. But they were certainly guides to identifying the critical concepts that kids needed to walk away with at the end of the unit. And that, of course, is what Jay McTighe now talks about doing: essential and enduring learning. (Hilda, Interview, 4/22/02)

The Social Studies/Language Arts Coordinator's mention of the British educational system may be interpreted as more than a momentary digression. The parallels in British curriculum work and what is done in this district may be more than coincidental. When the early curriculum support teacher sought ideas abroad, she found inspiration in a child-centered British infant school system. Although the current Social Studies/Language

Arts Coordinator recognizes that there is not a national curriculum in America today, as she seeks ideas at the national or international level, she is surrounded by more "homogenizing" ideas in state standards. The qualitative data gathered for this study supports the familiar argument that state control and increased standardized testing is having a negative impact on teachers' perceptions of their curriculum (e.g. Klein,1991; McNeil, 2000). New state standards were identified by every participant in this study as a primary influence on their curriculum work.

Changing Views of the Curriculum Development Process

The teachers' newest units, nearly 1000 pages in length, are so detailed that they practically script daily lessons and offer guidelines for how many days to spend on each topic. Many teachers refer to the current social studies/language arts units as "cookbooks". Often teachers cite the need to help first-year teachers as the reason why lessons must be laid out in such detail and so many specific activities are included. And while teachers believe that new teachers are the ones who are assisted the most by the units, they also recognize that new teachers are also under the most pressure to teach the units exactly as written. The units, which were supposed to "free" teachers from the limits of textbooks have come full circle so that at least one veteran teacher felt that she was back to "almost basals" like she had started her teaching career with in the 1950's (Retired teacher, personal phone interview, 12/6/01). Another teacher, a 29-year veteran of the school system, noted that as units became standardized across the district, the "camaraderie" of teachers working in small teams as curriculum developers had been lost (Interview, 3/19/02). Those who teach the units usually are not part of the "creative

process" of conceptualizing them, so the ownership of the curriculum seems to be less than in the early 1970s.

As teachers reflected on how their curriculum work had changed over their tenure in the district, they emphasized the altered expectations for teachers and how the use of time had evolved since the early 1970s. A veteran teacher described how the culture of curriculum development had shifted.

> There really were fewer expectations for us. Basically,...we had a greater amount of time to focus on the curriculum than we do now...What we have suddenly is an increased pressure on our instructional time. It used to be that I could count on almost all morning every day of uninterrupted time... That doesn't happen any more. We have so many special things happening. The computer lab's here, and they're chipping into my instructional time. Learning enrichment is here and they're chipping into my instructional time. The number of kids that we identify for special services is way up and that's chipping into my instruction time. We have instruction or instrumental music lessons for kids and that's chipping into my instructional time. So, I would say that probably having that cookbook approach is just maybe one less thing for people to worry about. (Josephine, Interview, 3/19/02)

While detailed units offered teachers "one less thing to worry about" they also decreased teachers' sense of ownership of the curriculum. While some of the findings of this study are congruent with Hargreaves (1994) research on the intensification of teachers' work, building on Apple and Jungck's (2000) theorizing suggests that more prescribed curriculum may actually be a way to impress hegemony upon teachers who are already overburdened by the demands of teaching. A prescriptive interdisciplinary curriculum may be a conservative response to the post-modern pressures of "too much to do."

Silva's (2000) study of three 5th grade teams who implemented a newly revised interdisciplinary unit in this district found that the teachers' feelings about implementation of the unit depended largely upon the congruency between their own

beliefs and the content of the curriculum. Although the documentation within the units suggests that they offer flexibility, Silva's study suggests that some grade-level teams feel strong pressure from administrators and the structure of the unit to implement the units as written. Other teachers asserted themselves early on in the process and simply used the curriculum as a guide, while they adapted lessons to meet the students' needs in their own classrooms. Teachers who were more highly involved in the writing of the units or who had fewer years of experience teaching seemed to be most pleased with the units and implemented them most closely as written. While Silva's research relied on focus group interviews, Thein (2001) used surveys to determine teacher's perceptions of a newly revised primary unit in this district. Thein's quantitative data confirmed the finding that unit writers had much more positive perceptions of the units, as they were written, than other teachers who were implementing the units.

One teacher in my study, who had taught for several years in a different district that relied on social studies textbooks, described the units he used now as "more challenging, more stimulating...because there's more freedom for you to be more creative...In the textbook curriculum there was a lot of breadth and very little depth...With our unit curriculum you can do more depth" (Robert, Interview, 2/5/02). Despite his assessment that the units allowed for more creativity, he also commented in his same conversation with me that, "with the newer units. . . if you wanted to you could take that unit and follow it step-by-step and teach the curriculum." Another teacher with fourteen years in the district echoed Robert's sentiments about the units.

> I think that's what's exciting to me about the curriculum and about the way we do units and renewal. I think if I had to do the same units every year in the same way with textbooks--oh look we're in November, so page 90-- I don't know how you would be able to stretch yourself as much. (Dinah, Interview, 1/16/02)

While teachers appreciate the units as a better alternative to textbooks, they also worry that the units may be getting more structured and less inspiring then they used to be.

> I feel a little more of a crunch lately, that we don't have as much freedom as we used to (this is my 14th year, so I've been here a while)...in the name of equity across buildings, across trying to make it more the same. Every opportunity in every corner I get to discourage that, I really try to because I think that when you do that, when you really push to make things equitable and the same, sometimes what falls out of that is mediocrity. (Dinah, Interview, 1/16/02)

Themes in the Curriculum Change Stories

Empowering Teachers Conflicts with Maintaining Consistency Across the District

Perhaps one of the key problems with social studies curriculum development and dissemination is the fundamental tension between the power of "doing" and the time constraints faced by most teachers. Bill Ayers (2001), in reflecting on his early days of teaching, realized that when it came to his struggle to improve the curriculum,

> The quest itself is really the thing worth doing—it is what infuses everything with energy and drive—not the completion, not the end-point. Furthermore, whatever insights I was gaining could not be transferred intact to inert teachers. If others became excited by the work, they reinvented and pursued it in their own ways and contexts; if not it was just another of the millions of good ideas that wash over teachers all the time. (pp. 86-87)

Ayers' comments suggest that a small group of volunteers writing a unit and then having that unit disseminated by a CST is inherently problematic. While no one has an endless amount of time to devote to developing curriculum, there needs to be a more inclusive process in which more (or all) teachers feel invested in the creation of social studies curriculum.

Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning (2001) suggest four perspectives on curricular change: technical, cultural, political, and post-modern. The technical

perspective on curriculum, or analyzing if teachers are "able" to create social studies curriculum, is a "given" in this PDS. The district in this study enjoys a 34 year-old history of encouraging teachers to develop and document their curriculum work in social studies/language arts integrated units. Teachers have successfully created scores of units over the years.

When units were developed by individual teams in individual schools, the energy level seemed high, and participation in curriculum leadership appeared pervasive. The assistant superintendent who had been the principal who first advocated interdisciplinary social studies units recognized that the writing of those units was one of the most important forms of professional development for teachers. Now that units are developed for the whole district by ten or twelve volunteers, not every teacher experiences the process of curriculum writing. So, from a technical perspective, teachers' development as curriculum leaders has been stymied in some respects.

When administrators talk about teachers' leadership in social studies curriculum work today, the leadership has been reduced to serving as a unit "chair." As a chair, the teacher "leads" one meeting each school year, but the CST also communicates a district-wide agenda at that meeting. Of the curriculum writing teams that have convened in the last ten years, most have simply revised units that were already in existence across the district. This is reminiscent of the criticism that Harold Rugg (1969) tendered against the "current methods of curriculum making" in 1926 when he characterized curriculum-making in the public school as "partial, superficial, and timorous 'revision' rather than general, fundamental, and courageous reconstruction" (p. 427). He criticized giving too much responsibility for curriculum development to:

> Committees composed of teachers and administrators who are already over-burdened with work. As a consequence, the existing program is always taken as the point of departure, and attention is centered on the addition of new materials or the subtraction of old materials...thus curriculum making becomes a process of accretion and elimination. (p. 427)

This leads to using Hargreaves et al.'s (2001) political perspective to analyze power relationships in the way that curriculum work is done. The process of creating a unit "addendum" is an established way for social studies teachers to develop curriculum in this district. But, social studies addenda, created in the context of the PDS in the last few years, have not been embraced by district administrators and curriculum specialists. The current process of curriculum development appears to privilege the office of the CST and curriculum coordinator. While teachers' insufficient time might be viewed as the reason CSTs need to do so much curriculum direction, the current process seems to be stymieing the energy and drive that teachers could devote to curriculum renewal.

Examining the curriculum work from a cultural perspective (Hargreaves et. al, 2001) suggests more tensions. Teachers share an understanding of the historical focus on teaching social studies in this district through the vehicle of active learning and language arts. Today's focus on consistent implementation and accountability may be squelching the drive of individual teachers to create social studies lessons and materials that can be shared across the district. When teachers express concerns about the impact of new state social studies standards, they are identifying a potential mismatch between teachers' values and state policy makers' desires. A PDS culture that values inquiry and experiential learning may have a culture clash with a broader content-based standards culture. On the other hand, the cultural value of free-choice could be harnessed to promote individuality in how the standards are achieved.

Pivotal role of the Curriculum Supervisor

To many people in the district, the CST seemed the "natural" conduit of curriculum innovations. The role of the CST has historically been pivotal and possibly controversial in this district. In some ways the CST is similar to the curriculum "chairman" that Joseph Schwab (1983) advocated in his seminal article, "The practical 4: Something for curriculum professors to do." Schwab envisioned preparing and "refreshing" a curriculum chairman as the most important work professors of curriculum could do. The curriculum chairman, according to Schwab, should be "seen by teachers as one of theirs and not as an extension of the administration" (p. 256). The chair would excel at facilitating deliberation among a curriculum committee, exhibit familiarity with current research, and seek "curricular problems…both home and abroad" (p. 256). A teacher who had served on the writing team for a Native American unit in the mid-1990s described the role of the CST, who chaired the committee, by saying, "Even though she was chairing the unit, the input was more from the teachers and what we were actually doing within the classroom. She was just more like the facilitator" (Dinah, Interview, 3/1/02). In fact she went on to describe the "shared leadership" style of the CST who "was very good at organizing, and the behind the scenes kinds of stuff that needed to go on that I couldn't do…while being in the classroom…during the day" (Dinah, Interview, 3/1/02). Another teacher, with 12 years of experience in the district, described her current perception of curriculum supervisors differently:

> The way that our district is set up with having language arts support people and social studies people, I think there's some animosity between teachers and the people who are in these roles. There isn't always a lot of collaboration…It feels like …they [CSTs] don't come and ask for expertise, they're just giving us a lot of

> state standards and a lot of stuff. And so it's almost anything that comes from them is not very well received by teachers. And so if they're the people that gave the supplement, then it may or may not be very well received. (Kendra, Interview, 12/11/01)

There is a fine line between teachers wanting to be viewed as experts by curriculum supervisors and also wanting supervisors to be experts or advocates for curriculum themselves. This understanding of the role of the curriculum supervisor was supported by another teacher who is passionate about social studies curriculum. He felt strongly that the American History unit needed to include more geography instruction, so he created a variety of activities and materials to use in his own classroom to enhance geography learning. After spending much of a summer developing geography enrichment activities, he wanted to share his work with teachers across the district. He explained that the CST wasn't always the best conduit of curriculum addenda.

> One time, I did, because I was so passionate about it, put together all these extended map skills. And I went to the person who is in charge of social studies curriculum. And she thought it was great, but…her response to it was, "I don't think it is going to be received by other teachers because they are going to see it as one more load, rather than this could *replace*, or this is *in place of*, or this could be *better than*. They have already got a set curriculum, and unless it comes from us mandating that it needs to be done, it's not going to be done…"
>
> So, I suggested that, just send out a little note saying that these additional things are there. You could store them at the [curriculum materials center], along with the other social studies things, and if people want them they could request them. And that's the way we left it. I did that two years ago, and to this point, my understanding is zilcho people have requested it. (John, Interview, 11/26/01)

This teacher went on to use a metaphor to explain how isolated he felt sometimes as a curriculum trailblazer.

> Sometimes I feel like I'm a pioneer on an iceberg shoved out in the middle of the Arctic Ocean someplace. And no one is listening…It is frustrating for me because I want to share everything and my ideas with other people, hoping they'll use them in their classrooms…They'll say, "Yeah, that's a good idea." But, you know they are not going to do anything with it. (John, Interview, 11/26/01)

Another teacher shared John's concerns that teachers weren't paying attention to each other's curriculum revisions and found fault with work in isolation. Kendra had been successful in single-handedly revising a unit on Africa in the 1990s, but had moved to advocating that new unit revisions be created by cross district teams. When the curriculum supervisor had approached her and another teacher to write up some of their beginning of the year activities as a unit resource, the two thought that the unit should be written by a cross-district team. It would be "much better received if it comes from a group of people," Kendra explained (Interview, 3/18/02). Kendra and her colleague "decided that we wanted to have the last say. We had this vision for getting teachers together, getting them a sub, having them come for half a day during this year and brainstorm" (Kendra, Interview, 3/18/02). But Kendra had also learned from her recent efforts to talk with a cross-district group of teachers about a new unit that working with a group of teachers was contentious. Teachers shared such different beliefs about the value of the given unit topic that she knew it would take hard work to find a consensus.

Sometimes a CST nurtures an individual teacher's classroom innovation and suggests that it could be shared throughout the district. In one case, a teacher described how the CST responded to his language arts stations.

> The information is disseminated, but it's not always done formally…Our language arts person (CST) came and she was watching me do stations …Usually when I start to do my stations at the beginning of the year, they're like reading groups. The kids are all homogeneously grouped according to their reading ability. In this case we put them in … study groups of oceanographers so they travel through the stations as oceanographers. When they got to my station one group would have books with tidal pools, another one would have deep sea, the other one might have kelp forest. Whatever we were doing. So that was just another way to alter the grouping of the children in your classroom. So she saw me doing that. She says, "Can I have a copy of what you just did?" So I said, "Sure." So she took it. I mean she is a curriculum support teacher. So I'm sure

> she was sharing that with different people too. So yes, it does get out there. But it's not always in the most obvious ways. (Luke, Interview, 12/13/01)

Observation by a CST and collection of a teacher's curriculum ideas are an obvious way that teachers described the dissemination of their work. Sometimes an individual teacher's or team of teachers' work would be promoted to the rest of the district, but at other times teachers felt that an individual's or team's work would not be honored. In the case of a Native American addendum based on an individual teacher's university class project, the CST was supportive of this sort of addendum, according to the teacher who authored it. The curriculum supervisor copied the book suggestions for other teachers, purchased the books for each building to use, and offered encouragement to the teacher for her work (Dinah, Interview, 1/16/02).

Another teacher enthusiastically described a unique lesson she and her PDS intern had created and shared with the other teachers in her school. But, her project was not included as an addendum to a unit because,

> We knew what we were doing. We had shared it with other people. The district usually doesn't work like that. You have to be asked to write an addendum, or maybe the curriculum people will say to you, we heard about this, "Would you write it up and we'll print it, and pass it out to everybody else?" That didn't happen. (Josephine, 3/19/02)

Josephine's quote illustrates the power of the curriculum supervisor in the way the district functions. Historically, the role of the CST has been significant in supporting curriculum development and dissemination in this district that eschews textbooks. But when interns create curriculum, CSTs have reacted with skepticism about the value of such work. This view of the CST is reflective of the post-modern concern with "experts" and an overload of information that leads to individuals feeling isolated.

Implications

This historical case study is the story of teachers and administrators working together over four decades to develop and implement an interdisciplinary curriculum. What began as a labor of love for small groups of teachers, a principal, and two curriculum specialists has evolved into a lengthy formalized district-wide procedure. Others can learn from the rich history of the early 1970s curriculum work of teachers who were supported by a cadre of administrators as they re-designed the way social studies would be taught. Veterans of the district named the process of developing units as one of the most valuable forms of in-service social studies teacher education. The teachers' and administrators' stories suggest that several driving forces in this curriculum development process should be addressed.

The role of the curriculum specialist has been crucial throughout this district's history. Teachers and administrators appreciate curriculum supervisors who recognize and nurture the talent of school-based curriculum developers, as well as bring theoretical and international experiences to the curriculum development process. Universities need to prepare all teachers and administrators to find practical applications of learning theory, diverse educational models, and the talents possessed by local teachers.

In addition, there seems to be a role for empowering teachers to work in teams to be curricular developers. In a Professional Development School partnership or in any district, teachers' roles as professionals may be enhanced through direct involvement in curriculum development. Teachers yearn for the collegiality and empowerment associated with developing curriculum units that others will share. Critical friends

groups would be one way of building a community of professionals in which everyone defines himself/herself as a curriculum leader.

While teachers in this district have long sought to enliven social studies and language arts instruction through a thematic, interdisciplinary approach, issues such as time, accountability, and state standards complicate the process. Several teachers and administrators suggested that using a form of teacher inquiry (or action research) might enliven the curriculum development process as it strains to become standards-based. The PDS had invigorated teachers to do their own inquiry and several of the participants wanted to apply action research ideas to curriculum development. Standards-based curriculum does not have to be scripted or look the same in every school building. Instead, teachers should be encouraged to consider ways that they can meet state requirements while building on their unique skills and children's interests.

Developing interdisciplinary curriculum has been a way for teachers to improve their own sense of professionalism. Implementing the units that they created and sharing curriculum with a broader community has historically invigorated the teaching staff. While curriculum development has not been an easy process, this case study suggests that involving more teachers it the process and validating that work provides "something for curriculum professors (and school leaders!) to do" (Schwab, 1983).

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Appendix A

Veteran Curriculum Developers' Interview Protocol

1. How do you remember the district units being born?
2. Who do you give the most credit for creating the units?
3. Could you describe the socio-political climate when folks began creating these units?
4. What was the motivation for creating these units?
5. How did other teachers and administrators throughout the district respond to the units?
6. Did you have any kind of response from the state to your units?
7. What was the relationship between the university and the elementary curriculum in those days?
8. How did you conceptualize social studies in those days?

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